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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/827,461	04/19/2004	John E. Bennett		2993
30621	7590	10/10/2006		
JENSEN + PUNTIGAM, P.S. SUITE 1020 2033 6TH AVE SEATTLE, WA 98121			EXAMINER LOCKETT, KIMBERLY R	
			ART UNIT 2837	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 10/10/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/827,461	BENNETT, JOHN E.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Kim R. Lockett	2837	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/9/04</u> .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ .

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The claims are narrative in form and replete with indefinite and functional or operational language. The structure which goes to make up the device must be clearly and positively specified. The structure must be organized and correlated in such a manner as to present a complete operative device. Note the format of the claims in the patent(s) cited. The narrative form of the claims includes the phrases "an easily removable rear panel to permit ..." and "which is quick and easily replaced..", "as well as the expansion, of the", etc. The applicant is behooved to review all of the claims for such narrative informalities.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rohrbough.

As the applicant's invention is best understood Rohrbough discloses the use of a metal frame (column 1, lines 30-35) for a zither that accommodates a plurality of chord bars (column 1 lines 25-30). Rohrbough also discloses the use of device that is unaffected by string tension and humidity (column 3, lines 30-35) and interchangeable chord bars (column 3, lines 50-60) and the use of a chord bar retainer and a retaining assembly (see figure 1). Rohrbough does not disclose the specific use of a rear panel to permit interchangeable units or expansion.

However it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device as disclosed by Rohrbough to include a rear panel since Rohrbough discloses the use of side walls that provide a variance of positions of chords bars.

Papers related to this application may be submitted to Group 2800 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Group 2800 via the PTO 2800 Fax Center at 703-872-9306.

For assistance in **Patent procedure, fees or general Patent questions** calls should be directed to the **Patents Assistance Center (PAC)** whose telephone number is **800-786-9199**. Assistance is also available on the Internet at www.uspto.gov.

Art Unit: 2837

Any inquiry concerning **this communication or earlier communications from the examiner** should be directed to **Kim Lockett whose telephone number is (571) 272-2067**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lincoln Donovan can be reached on (571) 272-1988



KIMBERLY LOCKETT
PRIMARY EXAMINER